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**MONTENEGRO GOOD  
LOCAL GOVERNANCE  
PROJECT**

**PARTICIPATORY  
MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE  
PUBLIC DEBATE  
PROCESS – FIVE CASE  
STUDIES IN  
MONTENEGRO**

Prepared for



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## **PARTICIPATORY MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE PUBLIC DEBATE PROCESS:**

### ***Five Case Studies in Montenegro***

#### ***Background***

In its efforts to ensure Montenegrin municipalities have the capacity and know-how for the efficient, transparent and democratic development of municipal regulations that support the Law on Local Self Government, the Good Local Governance Project (GLG) invited five Montenegrin municipalities to join the project of ordinance development, drafting, and the public debate process for municipal ordinances.

The project consisted of a series of trainings and on-site intensive expert assistance by the GLG team. The five participating municipalities are Bar, Kotor, Kolasin, Pljevlja and Rozaje.

During initial consultations with GLG, the municipalities selected the ordinances they wished to work on:

- Ordinance on the Method and Procedure for Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs (Bar, Kotor)
- Ordinance on Communal Police (Kolasin)
- Ordinance on Establishment of the Council on Protection of Local Governance (Pljevlja)
- Ordinance on the Municipal Assembly Rulebook (Rozaje)

In the cases of Bar, Kotor and Rozaje, the Model Ordinances developed by the Union of Montenegrin Municipalities (UMM) and the Ministry of Justice served as the basis for developing the texts.

The Good Local Governance Project helped establish the municipal working teams, with the recommendation that they include, based on the previous stakeholder analysis, those municipal staff and community members who would contribute most productively to developing the ordinances. In addition to municipal staff, representatives of NGOs and the media were involved in the work of the municipal working teams.

The working teams devoted six weeks to developing statements of ordinance goal and purpose, and the preliminary draft ordinance. GLG provided each working team a Manual on Developing Municipal Ordinances, as well as UMM Model Ordinances, and suggestions related to modifying the Models to comply with the conditions and specific features of each respective municipality. Special emphasis was placed on using the models as source guides only and not adopting them wholesale. Rather, the working teams were encouraged to devise a participatory process by which the ordinances would be developed and reviewed with respect to local applicability.

***Workshop Series on Ordinance Development, Drafting  
and the Public Debate Process***

In addition to the provision of resource materials and ongoing technical assistance, GLG held a series of workshops designed to provide technical training as well as a space for the five municipalities to share experiences and innovative practices.

At the first workshop, held in Podgorica on June 17, 2005, the working teams presented draft statements of the goal and purpose of the ordinances and draft content for the ordinances, with a special focus on how their drafts differ from the UMM Model Ordinances. GLG led a discussion on possible improvements and further text revisions. The workshop also focused on how to obtain citizen input into the drafting phase and crafting a citizen participation plan.

Having in mind that the concept of an ordinance is a summary of a legal regulation text, GLG strongly recommended the working teams to develop goal and purpose statements that provide a succinct, albeit user-friendly, description of the ordinance content, including explanations on the significance of its adoption and implementation. GLG also encouraged the participants to use these statements when appearing in public and giving presentations, and to invite the citizens to provide suggestions to improve the ordinances by using various mechanisms for obtaining citizen feedback.

The importance of providing feedback to the citizens was also stressed as an effective means to establishing trust between local government bodies and the citizens. Out of the number of mechanisms of citizen involvement presented by the GLG, municipalities were advised to utilize those that are readily available or relatively easy to apply (i.e., mechanisms that have little or no fiscal impact or require additional training).

Finally, draft Citizen Participation Plans were developed to ensure all stages of the process were connected to the citizenry.

Following this first workshop, municipal teams revised their ordinance goal and purpose statements, applied a number of citizen participation tools and techniques, collected and analyzed citizen feedback, and incorporated much of this input into the draft ordinances.

Some of the mechanisms the participating municipalities used, include:

- Sending information and Model Ordinance text via electronic mail or personal delivery to stakeholders
- Presentation to the media of Model Ordinance text
- Notices on information boards about ordinance-related activities, and on possibilities for access to and commenting on preliminary drafts
- Placing notices on municipal and neighborhood districts' bulletin boards
- Organizing roundtables
- Involving media (radio/TV/newspapers)
- Publishing press releases
- Placing information on municipal websites
- Mailing invitation letters for citizen forums
- Organizing citizen forums

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- Organizing focus groups
- Organizing meetings with NGO sector
- Organizing expert public debates
- Placing comment boxes in strategic areas in the municipality
- Setting up municipal hotlines
- Creating promotional materials (brochures, posters, newsletters)

At the second workshop, held in Pljevlja on August 3, 2005, the working teams presented the results achieved to date in finalizing their goal and purpose statements and developing the draft ordinances. They also expanded their citizen participation plans to include the public debate process. Through presentations, exchange of opinions and suggestions coming from all participants, the teams formulated the Public Debate Plans in order that they effectively comply with the process of obtaining citizen input and, ultimately, contribute to a quality ordinance and its efficient implementation. Participants identified concrete strategies, action steps, responsible persons and timeframes, and expected results for each individual activity as well as for the overall public debate process.

Following this workshop, and after the Municipal Assemblies had adopted the draft proposals, the teams worked on adjusting and implementing the Public Debate Plan.

New experiences, evaluation of the process, recommendations for other municipalities, as well as a critical review of the project performance was the subject of the concluding workshop, held in Podgorica on December 2, 2005.

In the course of the preparations for the third workshop, GLG visited each municipal team with the aim of obtaining information on the challenges they faced during the process, ascertaining their view as to whether the process was useful and whether it led to the results expected, and to become better acquainted with aspects of the process that were not feasible and/or obstacles municipal teams faced during the implementation of the project.

During the workshop, the working teams presented some of the best practices, challenges, and lessons learned that emerged throughout their work on developing specific ordinances and engaging citizens prior to and throughout the public debate process. Representatives from other municipalities were also invited to attend to share experiences and learn from their peers.

The seminar was organized around the main phases of conceptualizing, drafting, reviewing, and adopting a municipal ordinance as set forth in the GLG guidelines for municipal ordinance development. Special emphasis has been placed on obtaining citizen input into the early drafting phases as well as during the review process of the public debate.

Each participating municipality was asked to present one aspect of the ordinance development/public debate process phase, e.g., establishment of a working group (Pljevlja), development of a purpose and goal statement for the ordinance (Kotor), crafting of a citizen participation plan, including the public debate process (Kolasin), and designing and implementing the public debate (Rozaje). Although the process itself was “on stage”, the best practices or challenges inherent in a specific ordinance topic were also in focus throughout the day, providing good fodder for discussion and lessons for participating working teams to take home as they gear up to develop a different ordinance.

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All participating cities acknowledged that they learned a great deal about techniques and tools for engaging citizens in the work of their municipality—and that they have already begun or plan on applying these skills in other settings.

For example, Pljevlja, in response to a citizen's question on how members of the Council on Protection of Local Self Governance will be appointed, decided to conduct a survey that will invite citizens to propose candidates for the Council. They will also employ this and other techniques during their budget development and hearing process. Both Kotor and Pljevlja used the tools and techniques in the development of the Ordinance on Neighborhood Districts. Bar, too, is utilizing many skills acquired during the process for obtaining citizen priorities for budget development and town planning. All participants remarked on the value of the process for developing future ordinances and other regulations, especially with respect to the cross-institutional working groups and involving citizen input in early stages of the process—as opposed to just the public debate.

Although many of the municipalities used the Model Ordinances developed by the Union of Montenegrin Municipalities (UMM) and the Ministry of Justice served as a basis for developing the draft ordinance texts, Bar stressed that their adopted ordinance on citizen participation almost entirely differs from the model due largely to the citizen input they received.

Finally, the workshop held a lively discussion on challenges of the process, such as funding issues (e.g., staff time, meeting costs, fliers, newsletters) and encouraging citizens to participate in general. Some of the participating municipalities will be exploring the inclusion of a line-item in the budget for public debate programs while others are considering going further and proposing the establishment of a full-fledged public information office that would be in charge of such affairs. Direct involvement and support of civil society groups was also considered as a strong device in overcoming the financial and staffing problems. The participants also discussed the possibility of monitoring whether the ordinances are having the intended impact on their environment.

### ***Project Implementation in Five Municipalities***

#### ***Municipality of Bar***

In the course of the first workshop, the Bar working team already had the draft *Ordinance on Method and Procedure for Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs*, which was prepared for the Municipal Assembly debate. Therefore, citizen participation in the early phase of development was too late, but was intensified during the public debate process. Through workshop participation and GLG technical assistance in the field, the working team was able to develop the ordinance goal and purpose statements and a comprehensive Public Debate Plan.

The Bar Municipal Assembly adopted the draft Ordinance in August and appointed a body for implementing the public debate process—which in effect was the working team that participated in developing the draft Ordinance. The working team included city staff, media persons, and NGO representatives.

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In the written materials, invitations and media presentations, the Bar team used the following ordinance goal and purpose statement:

*“In accordance with the Law on Local Governance and with the Bar Municipal Charter, which define, in principle, citizen participation issues, that is, citizen participation in conducting public affairs, this Ordinance sets, for the first time, within the local governance focus, the citizens and their needs and their right to decide on issues of their immediate interest. By defining the citizen participation strategies and techniques in the process of developing and adopting general regulations, citizens become agents, i.e., actual power holders, while local government becomes their service provider, which directs its work according to citizens’ needs and interests.”*

The working team also presented the ordinance content to the citizens along with the anticipated changes that would come out of Ordinance implementation (e.g., enhanced possibility for citizens to participate in local decision-making processes and more effective and efficient work of the local government).

Citizens were also informed that the following mechanisms were provided for implementing this Ordinance: public meetings, regular and occasional meetings with citizens, informing the local population through the Bar Municipality’s web site, information brochures, media, billboards and notice boards, obtaining citizen feedback, suggestions, and opinions through surveys and municipal hotlines, the education of local officials, employees and citizens, organizing workshops, seminars, round tables, and so forth.

In the course of preparing and organizing the public debate, the working group developed the following:

- Citizen Participation Plan for the process of Ordinance development, public debate implementation, and Ordinance adoption
- Public Debate Program
- Evaluation form for assessing the public debate process

The Citizen Participation Plan presents the goal and purpose of the Ordinance, defines target groups, methods and levels of communication with citizens, and the changes that are expected to follow upon its application.

The public debate program specifies the method of public debate implementation along with deadlines, location and time, responsible persons and expected outcomes of these activities.

The Evaluation Form for Public Debate assesses the experience of participants as related to the event, the organization and content of the event, the public debate itself, and the effect of objections to the final Ordinance version, with space to evaluate the facilitator’s performance as well.

The draft *Ordinance on Method and Procedure for Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs* was submitted to the target groups (Bar neighborhood districts, political parties, local government bodies, local NGOs, public companies founded by the Bar Municipal Assembly, joint-stock companies, business entities, etc.) for the purpose of obtaining critique, proposals and suggestions. The draft Ordinance was also published on the municipal website. The target groups were informed about the time and location of the future citizen meetings.

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During the public debate process, certain citizen participation tools and techniques, stipulated by the Ordinance itself, were applied:

- Draft Ordinance was placed on the municipal web site
- Notices and posters were placed at numerous public places
- Billboards were placed in municipal buildings
- Public debate process was published through media resources
- Comment box for citizen objections and suggestions was placed in the municipal building hall
- Notices for target groups were sent out
- Two citizen forums were held in rural communities and one central forum was held in the city, which was also broadcast on the radio

After the 30-day deadline for conducting the public debate had expired on September 3, 2005, the working team summarized the public debate results, reviewed all submitted objections, proposals and suggestions, evaluated their legal validity, i.e., their compliance with the legal regulations, prepared their own position with respect to the public debate feedback, and prepared the following:

- Public debate report
- Bill *Ordinance on Method and Procedure for Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs*

The public debate report, including responses to posed questions and the working team's standpoint on objections, proposals and suggestions, was made available to the public in several ways. For example, in addition to being published on the municipal website, the report was mailed to all public debate participants and presented to the media.

The bill Ordinance was sent to the Mayor for the purpose of being included in the Municipal Assembly session's agenda and for being sent to the Assembly members for consideration.

In the process of the public debate implementation, the participants were given the evaluation form through which citizens could evaluate the quality and method of the public debate organization and the facilitators' presentations. In total, 32 evaluation forms were filled.

To the question as to whether the public debate was properly organized:

- 75% of the participants answered "yes"
- 15,6% of the participants answered "don't know", and only
- 9,4% of the participants answered "no"

To the question if respondents thought the objections provided during the public debate would influence the final Ordinance contents, the participants answered in the following way:

- 58% answered "yes"
- 6,45% answered "no"
- 35,55% circled "don't know"

The municipality analyzed the evaluation results and prepared conclusions for improving the work of involving citizens in the consultation process.

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After passing through the public debate process, the document was considered and adopted at the Municipal Assembly session, which was held on October 21, 2005.

During the work on this Ordinance, the municipal officials collected contacts and developed a small data base of the key stakeholders (neighborhood districts, NGOs, business sector, health institutions, educational institutions, etc.), which they plan to utilize as the list of contacts with the citizens, for the purpose of engaging the citizens and ensuring their participation in the process of initiating ideas or solving common problems.

As a result of the overall process, the Bar Municipal Assembly adopted the document, which is vastly different from the model Ordinance, which had served as a starting basis. GLG considers this a highly positive result, indicating that the Ordinance is well adapted to the actual situation in the municipality and to the available resources and mechanisms that are most efficient to utilize.

In order to implement the Ordinance as effectively as possible, the municipality allocated funds, which will be provided to the NGO sector, for two projects: printing a guide for the citizens, related to the Ordinance on their participation in conducting public affairs, and a survey on citizen needs related to capital investments. This will be used to prepare a quality and responsive capital budget and for considering the citizen needs prior to the process of developing the budget for the next fiscal year.

### ***Municipality of Kolasin***

The Kolasin municipality chose to cooperate with GLG in developing the *Ordinance on Communal Police*. A model for developing this Ordinance does not exist, so the municipality working team created the basis for the draft document based on the GLG legal advisor's guidelines regarding the Ordinance concept and contents.

All suggested steps were followed and a working team, made up of NGO representatives and the media, developed the Ordinance concept:

*“This Ordinance defines the establishment and work of the communal police that protects the communal order and cleanliness, and takes care of environment protection to ensure conditions for local development, primarily tourism, which is one of the Kolasin’s basic, strategic development branches. The Ordinance implementation will improve the quality of services in all areas of communal inspection, and it is expected that the citizens will contribute more to maintenance of the communal order in the town, as a response to the establishment and work of this body.”*

Citizens were very much involved in the pre-drafting phase, i.e., immediately upon the development of the first text and prior to the Assembly procedure. The working team conducted a stakeholders' analysis and defined target audiences for citizen engagement in the process. The target groups included craftsmen, local investors – private entrepreneurs, volunteers, local NGOs, youth, pensioners, local government, agencies and institutions, local tourist organizations, municipal road fund, public utility services company, market salesmen, owners of catering facilities, taxi drivers, apartment building residents, and rural residents.

The target group was provided with the pre-draft Ordinance, and a variety of citizen participation techniques were deployed for collecting citizen suggestions: hotline, comment box and media surveys. The pre-draft document included alternatives for solving some problems and the citizen suggestions helped to concretize some of the



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solutions offered. The comment box collected twenty-odd proposals, and the survey collected twenty more. The working team, including the citizens in the draft development phase, managed to interest the critical number of people in providing their input into the further public debate process. Since many of the citizens' suggestions were within the jurisdiction of other municipal bodies and were not related to the Ordinance itself, the analysis of the comments was sent to the Mayor and to all the secretariats to which the comments and suggestions referred.

The Municipal Assembly, at its session held on September 30, unanimously adopted the draft Ordinance and appointed a body for implementing the public debate on the bill Ordinance. Like Bar, this body was the working team that participated in creating the bill Ordinance. The public debate lasted for 30 days. The working team prepared the public debate program in the format required by the Municipal Assembly, which included all mechanisms envisaged by the public debate plan and designed at the second GLG workshop. These included an intensive media campaign (radio and TV), promotional material (invitations, brochures), comment boxes and citizen forums. The TV show that was broadcast on October 25 on Orion NTV was also attended by the GLG representative, the working team members, and the representatives of individual institutions that were identified by the stakeholder analysis.

With regard to the goal and purpose statements, the working team used them in the summarized form in the public debate implementation, brochure text, invitation letters addressed to key stakeholders, and when appearing in the media. In this way, the working team conveyed, in popular language, the contents of the legal document to the citizens and thus acquainted them to the debate topic so that an average citizen could participate in the related debate.

The working team's key recommendations include the introduction of the comment box as an effective information channel. Citizens indicated that the guarantee of anonymity can enhance citizen cooperation in providing assessments and suggestions.

### ***Municipality of Kotor***

For the purpose of collecting citizen input during the pre-drafting phase, the Kotor working team gathered the key stakeholders for a meeting. The representatives of the Bureau for Protection of Cultural Monuments, Bureau for Sea Biology, all public companies, numerous NGOs, local government officials, museum, and so forth, were invited and their suggestions were incorporated in the text of the draft Ordinance.

After incorporating those suggestions, the draft Ordinance was sent to the Kotor Municipal Assembly, which adopted the draft and opened it for public debate in accordance with the developed citizen participation plan. The public debate lasted for twenty days and included a number of citizen participation tools and techniques, including: brochures with an explanation of the Ordinance, radio shows, placing the Ordinance text in the neighborhood districts' premises, on the municipal website and the NGOs' websites, four citizen forums with predefined procedures on registering speakers, note takers and processing the conclusions.

### ***Municipality of Pljevlja***

The Pljevlja Mayor opted for developing the *Ordinance on Council for Development and Protection of Local Governance*. The Pljevlja Mayor appointed an expert team that would work, together with the GLG representatives, on the Ordinance text and on the public debate process related to the Ordinance. The working team was

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comprised of five members, including one NGO representative who represented all the Pljevlja NGOs.

The team received clear guidelines from the GLG legal advisor about the Ordinance content. The draft Ordinance was unanimously adopted at the Assembly session, held on July 7, 2005. The municipality believed that involving the NGO representatives was very useful, particularly when considering that the working team had no time to involve the citizens in the pre-drafting phase. Including the NGO representative ensured that the citizens could have their say.

The working team that worked on drafting the Ordinance was also charged with conducting the public debate. Considering that the media have an important role in the society and that they are a good instrument for providing timely and quality citizen information, the team made use of a media representative's participation to inform the wider public about the importance of the Ordinance for all the citizens, about who may be a Council member, as well as about the Ordinance content.

GLG assisted the Pljevlja expert team, as well as other municipal teams, in developing the plan of involving citizens in the public debate process by helping them establish the Ordinance goal and purpose statement, identify the target group, develop specific messages aimed at the target group, identify appropriate methods of communicating with the target audience, and develop an action plan with a defined budget.

The working team identified the following as their target groups: Pljevlja municipality citizens and neighborhood district representatives; youth, NGOs and Pljevlja media, representatives of the local government and Assembly members' committees.

The working team employed the following techniques for involving citizens in the process: a brochure targeting all citizens; contact show on local radio and TV targeting all citizens; roundtable targeting the youth, local government representatives and Assembly members' clubs; citizen forum targeting citizens and neighborhood district representatives; municipal website targeting the youth, NGOs and media; municipal hotline and e-mail targeting all target groups.

The new mechanisms included the comment box and municipal hotline. Comment boxes were placed in the municipal building and in the citizen information center; however, no comments were received.

The citizen participation plan was not fully implemented. Considering that the public debate was organized during the school vacation, the elementary and high school students were not covered by round tables and youth councils at schools. A number of young people that were involved through the NGO sector participated in the Ordinance debate.

Other NGOs also contributed significantly to creating the Ordinance through their representatives in the working team, and through the public debate process, which proved significant regarding the comments and suggestion related to the Ordinance.

The Ordinance purpose and goal statement was useful to the expert team in clarifying to the target groups the general purpose of creating the Ordinance, as well as in developing the public debate concept. The citizens were not involved in the Ordinance drafting process because there was no time for doing so, as the draft Ordinance had already entered the Assembly procedure.

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Citizen turnout during the public debate was relatively small. The citizen forum was attended by 30 or so people, of which 20 participated in the discussion and provided quality suggestions and proposals. Citizens were provided with answers to their suggestions, which were submitted in writing.

The Pljevlja expert team considered the major problem in involving the citizens to be the identification of a common interest, which was intended to interest the citizens in participating in the public debate. However, they considered the newly established communication with target groups as an unqualified success of the ordinance development process and will continue to work with them on future ordinances.

In fact, the expert team indicated that the experience of drafting the Ordinance on Council for Development and Protection of Local Governance was very useful for developing the Ordinance on Establishing Neighborhood Districts.

The public debate related to this Ordinance was concluded on October 8, 2005. The Ordinance was unanimously adopted at the November sitting of the Pljevlja Municipal Assembly.

### ***Municipality of Rožaje***

Similar to other municipalities, the Rozaje municipality used the assistance of the GLG staff when developing the Municipal Assembly Book of Procedures. The expert team, appointed by the Mayor, was comprised of five members, of which one was an NGO representative.

Involving the NGO representative was estimated as a positive action, because this representative contributed to adjusting the Ordinance to local conditions. The Rozaje team used the Urban Institute assistance when developing the Citizen Participation Public Debate Plan related to this Ordinance.

The identified target groups included NGO representatives, neighborhood district representatives, citizens, media, Assembly members' committees, and local government representatives.

The communication between target groups was intensified after the Municipal Assembly adopted the draft Ordinance. Special communication channels used included expert public debate/round table, which was targeted at the Assembly members, local government representatives and media; municipal hotline, targeting all target groups; comment box, targeting all target groups; citizen forum, targeting citizens, neighborhood district representatives and NGOs.

The municipal hotline and comment box were new features for the municipality in involving citizens. Two lawyers managed the municipal hotline, while the comment box was placed in the municipal building hall. The citizens were informed about this via local radio and TV. In spite of public announcing on the radio, no comment or objection was sent via municipal hotline or placed in the comment box.

The process of developing the draft Ordinance involved the local government representatives and focus groups were held to highlight key discussion points.

The expert public debate was attended by 60 percent of the invitees, amounting to 27 participants. Only four suggestions were provided, of which two were incorporated in the Ordinance text. Most of the participants were positive about the Ordinance text

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and the public debate process. The expert team answered the comments in the written form.

There were some minor deviations in the Public Debate Plan in terms of deadlines, but all the planned activities were fully implemented. The largest obstacles in the ordinance development process and citizen involvement were lack of funds, lack of staff and lack of diversity on the expert team.

The goal statement was considered very useful, not only for the public debate related to the Ordinance, but also because the same methodology was utilized when the municipality began developing the *Ordinance on Citizen Participation in Conducting Public Affairs* and the *Ordinance on Neighborhood Districts*.

The bill Ordinance was adopted by the Rozaje local parliament, but its implementation will start with the new Assembly composition.

The working group considers that the overall process was defined in a quality way. They believe that they performed well regarding the identification of the stakeholders, and regarding the process of inviting people to the expert public debate. Namely, 15 days prior to holding the expert public debate, invitations containing the complete material were sent to the target audiences, which proved positive.

### **Main Challenges**

One of the main problems identified by the majority of municipalities in implementing a participatory ordinance development process is the lack of funds. Media appearances, advertisement costs in newspapers, printing costs for leaflets, invitations, and so forth, in some cases the need to rent space for holding citizen forums, as in Rozaje where they do not have an adequate meeting room, required unforeseen funds that were not included in the budget.

Apart from the financial problems, the municipalities also noted that there is a lack of staff capable of organizing public debates and performing the monitoring and implementation tasks implied in the adopted ordinances. Additionally, public debates related to different fields are often conducted by an almost identical team, which results in a bad image. The municipalities believe it is necessary to train staff that would exclusively be in charge of organizing public debates and would ensure that the process suggested by the GLG project is implemented in all its phases and employing all citizen participation tools and techniques available.

In addition, the municipalities realized that it was very difficult to motivate the citizens to participate in the process of developing legal documents in all its phases. Municipal ordinances as such are not considered very interesting and do not necessarily grab citizens' attention such as a strategic plan might. It is very difficult to present to the citizens the common interest contained in legislation and regulations. In fact, during the citizen forums that did attract a large number of people, the participants tended to focus on the issues related to their everyday needs, such as the quality of municipal services, instead of focusing on the proposed agenda. Nevertheless, by working on their message development (based on the goal and purpose statements), the municipalities seem to have had some success with, at the

very minimum, *informing* citizens about their activity, even if direct participation was difficult to obtain.

### ***Good Practices in Participating Municipalities***

Generally speaking, involvement of media and NGO representatives in the activities of the working teams, as well as involvement of a wider range of stakeholders in developing the proposed draft ordinances was deemed as very useful not only with respect to document quality and content, but also to establishing and enhancing a sound basis in communicating with the target groups.

All municipalities that participated in the project had the same structure of stakeholders in their working teams, that is, the working teams did not involve only the representatives of the local government but also the representatives of the NGO sector and media. Apart from these two groups, the municipalities did not involve other stakeholders. NGOs that participated in this process stated that this is the first time they have been invited by the local authorities to participate in such an important undertaking, and they expressed an interest to continue such practice in other fields where cooperation is possible. Involving the media representatives, on the other hand, enabled the working teams to transfer to the public the information regarding their work on ordinance drafting and on ordinance contents, as well as to inform them in a timely fashion on all the mechanisms through which they could provide their questions, suggestions or comments.

The working teams used the Ordinance goal and purpose statements in media appearances and as an introduction at the citizen forums in order to acquaint citizens with the document contents and its importance. This contributed to a better understanding of highly technical issues by an “average citizen”. The municipalities estimated that the goal and purpose statements, developed prior to ordinance drafting, not only served as a good guidance for conceptualizing the ordinance content, but also served as a means for presentation and for attracting attention to the Ordinance.

As for implementing the citizen participation tools and techniques that were part of the training provided by GLG, the working teams mainly applied those that did not require a lot of additional funds. The following is a selection of some of the ways the participating cities attempted to communicate and engage their citizenries.

- Kolašin, Kotor, Rožaje and Pljevlja opened a municipal hotline for collecting suggestions.
- Kolašin, Kotor and Pljevlja designed brochures to inform citizens on the ordinance contents they had worked on and invited the citizens to provide their suggestions.
- The Rozaje working team organized an expert public debate and sent the material for preparing it 15 days in advance.
- Kolasin, Kotor and Pljevlja used electronic mail to send the draft ordinances to target groups for consideration.
- All municipalities submitted the draft ordinances to the public in the municipal building, prior to adoption and upon Assembly procedure, of which they informed the public.

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- Pljevlja and Kolasin organized radio contact shows, where the citizens could ask questions, express their dilemmas, and ask for clarification from the working team, or provide their proposals and suggestions.
- In the course of the pre-drafting phase, Kolasin used the mechanism of submitting suggestions through comment boxes, of which one was posted in the municipal building, while the other one was posted in front of the street market, during the market day. The other mechanism proved more effective for several reasons: citizens are more willing to provide comments when guaranteed anonymity; they are also more willing for cooperation if a mechanism is easy to access, so that they do not consider it as an obligation.
- In the Bar municipality, the citizens were enabled to assess the performance of the working teams during the public debate implementation through the evaluation form, which was welcomed by the citizens, while the municipality manifested its intention to improve its work and adjust it to the citizens needs.
- Bar municipality submitted, by post, the feedback to citizens in a form of a processed report related to the citizen forum. The report contained the explanation why specific proposals were incorporated in the text and others were not. Apart from personal submission, what also proved useful was publishing the report on the municipal website and in the media.
- While working on this Ordinance, the Bar municipality collected the contacts and developed a small data basis on the key stakeholders, upon the performed stakeholder analysis. Since the Montenegrin municipalities have the problem of poor data bases, the municipality recommended to other municipalities to use this analysis when collecting the data on all municipal stakeholders (neighborhood districts, NGO sector, business entities, health institutions, educational institutions, etc.) that they are planning to utilize in the future as a citizen contact list, for the purpose of providing their participation in the processes of ideas generation and solving common problems.
- All municipalities conducted the citizen forums with clearly defined work rules and registering procedures, which contributed to a more productive and better focused discussion, and which also represents a novelty in conducting citizen forums in Montenegro.
- During the public debate process, Pljevlja municipality organized radio and TV contact shows, so that the citizens could directly ask questions and get immediate answers.
- Considering the dispersion of the area, Pljevlja municipality paid travel costs to neighborhood districts representatives, so that they do not come to the public debate on their own cost.

Most municipalities that participated in this process used the Citizen Participation Plan for involving citizens in the pre-drafting phase, to analyze stakeholders and the statement of goal and purpose, and to collect suggestions from citizens while working on other ordinances. Kotor and Pljevlja municipalities used the plan template when drafting additional ordinances, while Bar municipality used it when drafting their budget.

### ***General Recommendations***

According to the municipal teams' assessment, the process they took part in is an introduction into motivating the citizens to get involved in creating important city documents, which brings a number of positive dimensions into communication with

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the citizens, strengthening of local communities and generating ideas that come directly from them.

Until the moment when municipalities have a more precise organizational structure and establish new bodies to comply with it, they could use the capacities of the NGO sector, for the purpose of overcoming financial and staffing problems and for mobilizing the public. Through programs of support to this sector, NGOs could be involved as logistical support for conducting citizen forums or public debates, facilitating focus group discussions, helping employ the mechanisms for reaching the public (printing leaflets, guides for municipal regulations, promotional materials etc), conducting surveys on citizen needs (e.g., related to capital investments), and for continuous involvement in the activities of working teams.

The working teams that developed ordinances based on a model proposed by the Union of Montenegrin Municipalities, pointed out that the final content of the ordinances almost completely differs from the model text. They attribute this to the increased citizen involvement through a variety of means; the original text was largely adapted to the municipal situation, which, in the end, will surely contribute to greater ownership and more effective implementation.